



October 2017 News Update

Seed Collection Continues

We have two more prairie seed collection sessions scheduled this fall. Come spend a couple hours with us in these beautiful prairies. The harvested seeds will be used to improve the quality and diversity in the prairies at PFC.

Upcoming Sessions:

- October 7th, (Saturday) 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
- October 21st, (Saturday) 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

To sign up to help with Seed Collection, please email curt@popefarmconservancy.org and let him know which session(s) you would like to attend.

Seed collection is easy to do, and an enjoyable way to spend a couple hours in nature. We will have team leaders on hand to help you. Please join us – it's fun, and it's an investment in the future!

Thanks to ALL the Prairie Seed collectors!



Photo: Curt Caslavka

Past Events

Members Picnic, Sunday, September 10th



Photo: Barbara Esser

It was a beautiful day for a picnic, and a good time was had by all. The Friends celebrated a wonderful year and got a chance to catch up with each other. Mel Pope talked about the overall efforts of the Friends in 2017, our current financial position, and laid out some of the initial plans for 2018. **Thanks, to the events team** for putting the picnic together. I hope the beautiful weather becomes a staple for future picnics—it was great!

Weeding invasives in the Prairies



Oak Savanna Weeding Volunteers 2017, Photo: Curt Caslavka

We have heard many comments about the prairies at Pope Farm Conservancy this year. They are simply breathtaking. Wonder how they get that way? Some of it is because of people like the volunteers pictured above. They are doing an important service for all of us, and are having fun at the same time.

Thanks to the weeding volunteers!

Soils and Erosion Tour, Saturday, September 16th

Photo and Story: Robby Sogzogni

Saturday, September 16, was a perfect day to learn about soil composition at PFC. Led by Ed Boswell, a PhD candidate doing research at PFC, about a dozen people learned the difference between clay, sand and silt, and how different parts of the PFC have different percentages of each. This in turn leads to a difference in the soil texture and structure. Now we understand why our sunflowers grow better in some areas than others!

Thanks to Ed for sharing his knowledge with us.



Fall 4th grade MCPASD Field Trips, September 27-29

Last week, over three beautiful fall days, several hundred fourth grade students from the MCPASD, participated in class field trips at Pope Farm Conservancy. Students rotated through four stations, hosted by naturalists and Friends of Pope Farm, to learn about Native American agriculture, use of plants for food, technology for survival, and shelter. The students then had an opportunity to use their knowledge in a Seasonal Round activity. They had a great time collaborating and making decisions while enjoying the breathtaking scenery at Pope Farm.



Photo: Barbara Esser

The Friends successfully took over the portion of the field trips previously done by the State Historical Society. It was a great start, and more volunteers will be needed in the spring when the students return.

Thank you, field trip volunteers!

If you are interested in helping next spring, please contact Mel at mel@popefarmconservancy.org to request more information.

Pope Farm volunteers work to help increase monarch butterfly population

Written by Meg Gores



Volunteers having a ball catching and tagging Monarchs, Photo: Curt Caslavka

Watching monarch butterflies float lazily across the landscape is one of summer’s special pleasures. But the beloved orange and black monarchs face serious challenges, with their numbers declining by more than 80 percent since the mid-1990s.

Volunteers at the Pope Farm Conservancy, led by Curt Caslavka, are contributing toward research to help increase the monarch butterfly population. “Anything we can do at Pope Farm to help with this research is important,” said Curt.

In a trial project initiated this summer, volunteers tagged and released 50 newly hatched butterflies at the conservancy. They placed small stickers, or tags, on the butterflies’ wings, with each tag containing a number that identifies the monarch and where it came from.

The young monarchs will then migrate 2000 to 3000 miles to one of about a dozen different locations in Mexico.

What plants support monarchs?

An important part of the research involves learning what plants the monarchs are “nectaring” on when they are captured. This information will guide future efforts to plant species that benefit butterflies as they travel along their migration route.

“Here at Pope Farm, we’ve found monarchs like to nectar on showy goldenrod,” said Curt. “Native thistle is also liked at Pope Farm. But at this time of year, New England aster is likely to be the preferred plant.”



The Pope Farm monarch tagging project was started with the goal of tagging 50 monarchs. Curt says it didn't take long to tag 50, so he obtained 25 more tags that will be used this year. "Hopefully we'll get a call when somebody finds one of our monarchs at some point along its journey."

To learn more about the work being done at the Pope Farm Conservancy to increase the monarch population, contact curt@popefarmconservancy.org

Upcoming FOPFC Meetings

We welcome everyone to attend the following meetings to observe, offer your viewpoint, or to join these committees if you are interested.

Events Team Meeting

When: Wednesday, November 8th, 2017, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Town of Middleton Town Hall, 7555 W. Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI (across from the conservancy)

Discussion Topics: The Events Team will be creating the 2018 Events schedule. What talks and tours will be given? How can we share the stories of the land with the general public? Come and give us your ideas.

Education Team Meeting

When: Thursday, November 30th, 2017, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

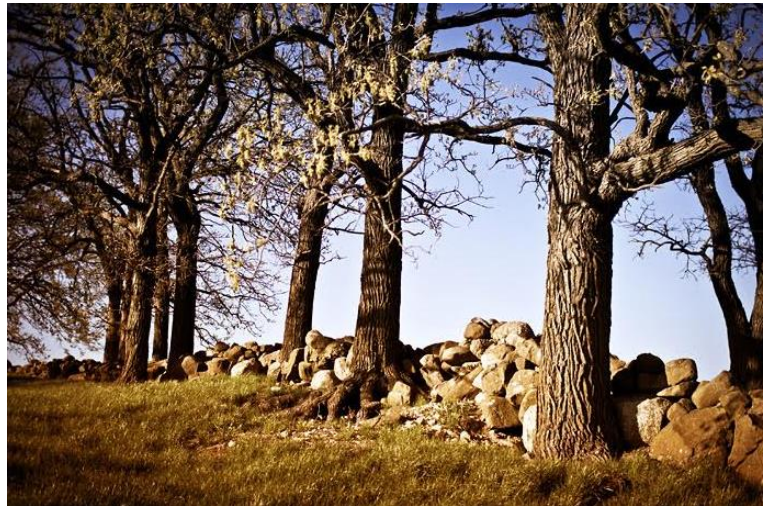
Where: Town of Middleton Town Hall, 7555 W. Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI (across from the conservancy)

We have identified the history and land ownership of the various farms comprising PFC, and we are studying the history of the crops and buildings. The German Immigration stories are almost complete. We hope you'll stop by.

Question of the Month

Question: What is the history behind the other Stone Fence in the Conservancy?

Answer: The second Stone Fence is located in the central part of Pope Farm Conservancy, and has become a popular spot for photographers. During Sunflower Days, people congregated in the shade of the trees to shoot family photos along the fence. We do not know when this Stone Fence was built, but probably it was later than the long Stone Fence you see from Old Sauk Rd that was built in the 1850s. At one time, there was a surrey and equipment shed on the Eastern side of this fence. One can occasionally find old iron remnants of farm equipment in the grass nearby. The photographer, Jonah Westrich, was standing in the middle of an old tractor lane when he shot this photo.



Friend of the Month

Thank you, Dan Olson!

During the grueling schedule of Sunflower Days, some of the Friends volunteered multiple times. One of the key volunteers who helped with the parking was Dan Olson. Dan was there day after day to help direct our parking efforts. Dan, ever cheerful, continued to take additional shifts when we were short of parking attendants. Dan was one of the many supervisors this year that attended meetings before the event to learn how to help supervise the parking effort. There is no way we could have had a successful Sunflower Days event without people like Dan Olson. Dan, we thank you so very much, for you have made a difference at Pope Farm Conservancy!



And a happy field of Sunflowers to you, Dan Olson!

Photos of the Month

It's not too late to catch the New England asters, now in bloom in the PFC prairies. You may even spot some late-season pollinators preparing for winter. Photo by Janie Starzewski



We estimate that the wildlife (mainly birds) will eat about 1/3 of the PFC sunflower crop before it's harvested in mid- to late November.



Photo by Stacey Meanwell

We welcome you to share your photos of Pope Farm Conservancy for our next "Photo of the Month." Please send your photos to janie@popefarmconservancy.org.

Renew Your Membership

Just a reminder...you can now renew your membership securely online at www.popefarmconservancy.org using a debit or credit card. We also accept checks by mail; please make checks payable to FOPFC and send to FOPFC, 10333 Blackhawk Road, Middleton, WI 53562. If you have already renewed your membership, THANK YOU for your support. For questions regarding your membership, please email [http://info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org).

Connect with FOPFC Online

Website: <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/>

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Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofpopefarmconservancy>

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**Thank you for joining the
Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!
Our Journey Begins and You are part of it!**